TAMIL TIMES

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TAMIL TIMES WISHES ITS READERS AND WELLWISHERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

MASS PROTESTS AGAINST DETENTION OF PRIESTS

Hindus, Muslims and Christians, farmers and workers, teachers and students, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, the old and the young, all joined Christian priests and nuns in a several thousand strong demonstration and march on November 30th in the Sri Lankan northern Tamil city of Jaffna. They were protesting against the arrest and detention of some Christian priests, a doctor, a university lecturer and his wife under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Braving the monsoon rains, the thousands who participated marched to the main Cathedral while others entered the Nallur Hindu Temple and the Jaffna University campus. There they staged a day-long fast while the nuns sang devotional hymns.

Participating in the march and fast were politicians, including the Tamil United Liberation Front MP's, trade unionists and leaders of all the religious denominations. The feeling and atmosphere were such that the security forces never attempted to interfere although a state of emergency existed under which all meetings and demonstrations of this type were prohibited.

Similar demonstrations and fasts are reported to have been staged in the Eastern Province cities of Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

The demonstration was organised by the Human Rights Defence Committee, comprising 15 organisations including General Union of Eelam Students, Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality, NSSP, Revolutionary Marxist Party, Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, Revolutionary Communist League, CP(Moscow), Tamil Youth Front, University Students Council and six other organisations.

The participation of the TULF MPs in the demonstration is regarded as a noteworthy development particularly in the context that it had been relatively inactive and reluctant to engage in joint actions with other organisations in the recent past.

Previous to the November 30th demonstration, whole day protest fasts and sit-ins were held throughout areas in the Northern Province following the arrest and detention of the clergymen.

On 18th November, having boycotted their lectures, more than 2000 under graduates of the University of Jaffna marched in silence carrying placards protesting against the detention and interrogation of the clergymen who were being held in the Gurunagar Army Camp.

Following this, ordinary people in various parts of the Jaffna peninsula held a series of spontaneous fasts and sit-ins:

★**PANDATHERIPPU:** On Sunday the 21st, from 7a.m. to 5 p.m., parishioners of Pandatherippu Church and Vilan Fatima Church were involved in a protest fast in the Periavilan Market compound. They sang hymns and held prayers in support of the arrested clergy. Hindu residents of the area too joined in the sit-in. At the end of the fast the members sent an urgent telegram to the President that the clergy should be freed immediately.

★**TINNAVELY:** On Monday the 22nd the students of the campus boycotted lectures and staged a protest march through the main roads, demanding the release of Assistant Lecturer Nithiyanandan, his wife Nirmala and an undergrad. The Catholic Union of the University played a leading role in the protest activities. After the protest march the students had a meeting to decide on further action.

★**MANIPAY:** On Tuesday, in the compound of St. Anthony's Church, hundreds of people including women and children gathered at 6a.m. braving the rains and wet weather. Members of the various denominations from Manipay, Mallakam, Uduvil, Sandilipay and Anaicottai, joined this fast till 6p.m. that day.

★**JAFFNA TOWN:** On Wednesday, under pouring rain

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NIRMALA HELD AMIDST MALES

Mr.V. Yogeswaran, MP for Jaffna, raised the question of the detention of Mrs. Nirmala Nithiyananda in Parliament on 26th November. Protesting against her detention, Mr. Yogeswaran said that Nirmala was arrested on mere suspicion and was detained in the Army Camp amidst males, where there were no women at all. He called it an uncivilised act. Even a woman accused of murder had a female guard. In the case of Nirmala, she was surrounded by male army personnel and held among males. Mr. Yogeswaran requested that, in the name of natural justice and fairness, Nirmala should be transferred from the Army Camp to a more suitable place.

Mrs. Nirmala Nithiyanandan is a holder of a Degree in Political Science of an American University, and is a well known personality in the Tamil Drama world. She is a skilled translator and actress on the Tamil stage.

STOP PRESS

YES TO REFERENDUM

The voting on December 22 was For extension 3.1 million Against 2.6 million Of the 8.1 million registered voters, only 70% voted whereas two months ago, in the Presidential Election, 81% went to the polls.

Of the electoral districts, 15 voted for and seven against, and four of the seven were the four Tamil districts of Jaffna, Wanni, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

A national State of Emergency was extended for a further month, from December 20.

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ON THE ROAD TO DICTATORSHIP

The people of Sri Lanka are being called upon to vote in a so-called referendum on 22nd December 1982, and say "YES" to their own disfranchisement for the next six years. That precisely is the intended effect of the move to extend the life of Parliament until August 1989.

Imagine the American or French President going to the people seeking the extension of the Congress or the National Assembly for a term of five or six years! That simply cannot happen because, not only such a move would be denounced as outrageously undemocratic, but also there is no constitutional provision to do that. Not so under the "Just and Righteous" regime of President J.R. Jayawardene. He does not care about the Opposition. He monkeys with the Constitution and seeks an extension of the life of Parliament!

All political parties in Sri Lanka, other than his ruling United National Party, have declared their opposition to the President's move. Major trade unions and civil rights organisations have denounced the proposal as demagogic exercise intended and calculated to undermine the democratic process.

Ignoring this massive opposition, J.R. is determined to go ahead on this perilous course of personal dictatorship. The country is shackled by a state of emergency. Members of the opposition parties, particularly those of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party including its Secretary, have been put behind bars. The only opposition daily, the 'ATHTHA' has been proscribed and the press sealed under emergency laws. Opposition campaign meetings have been allowed to be attacked and disrupted by pro-government thugs.

Having decided on the referendum, there is a feeling that J.R. will not hesitate resorting to any means to achieve his aim. Many recall the vote-rigging that took place during the District Development Council elections in Jaffna in June 1981, when some ballot boxes disappeared and later reappeared in the most unexpected of places. Unlike ordinary elections, where the agents and candidates normally can and are present at polling and counting stations to monitor what transpires, in a referendum as the one scheduled for December 22nd, there are no candidates and therefore no agents or representatives to monitor. Government appointed officers will conduct the poll and do the counting. In this context, there is a genuine fear among the people that the polling and counting may be rigged.

If by mischance, J.R. obtains the result he wants, Sri Lanka will be well on the road to a true dictatorship. Already coming events are casting their shadows across the streets of the country in the form of khaki clad gentlemen with guns and bayonets ever ready for use. Sri Lanka will cease to be in the diminishing ranks of the few democracies in Asia and join the infamous league of which General Suharto and President Marcos are distinguished members.

BISHOP PROTESTS AGAINST 'DEPLORABLE ACTION'

"Two of the priests taken into custody are still held by the security forces and subjected to mental pressure, intimidation and other questionable methods to extrract confessions from them", Bishop of Jaffna, Rt. Rev. B.Deogupillai, stated in a letter dated 23rd November 1982 to the Sri Lankan President, J.R. Jayawardene.

The letter adds:

"Last week some of my priests were taken into custody like common criminals by the security forces in the North **in spite of my offer to produce them for interrogation if and when needed.** Under the cover of the Emergency declared by you and the obnoxious Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been condemned by International Organizations such as Amnesty International, as contrary to fundamental human rights, this deplorable action was taken. **I vehemently protest against this violation of the fundamental rights** of the persons concerned and the humiliation and pain of mind caused to them and **the disrespect shown to the Catholic Church** which is held in good esteem here.

"Two of the priests taken into custody are still held by the security forces and **subjected to mental pressure,** intimidation and other questionable methods **to extract confessions from them. They have been denied the assistance of a lawyer during the interrogations.**

Therefore, I earnestly request you to **set them free immediately.** If necessary they could be interrogated under the ordinary laws **with the presence of a lawyer** to defend their good name and their interests."

Copies of the letter were sent to:

The Prime Minister, The Catholic Ministers & M.Ps,
The President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference & all the Bishops, His Exc. Papal Pro-Nuncio,
Rt. Rev. Dr. Swithin Fernando, Bishop of Colombo,
Rt. Rev. Dr. L. Wickremasinghe Bishop of Kurunegala,
The President, Methodist Church, Colombo, The President, Catholic Union of Sri Lanka, The Leader of the Opposition, and
Mr. M. Sivasithamparam M.P., President, TULF & the other MPs.

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS PROTEST

The University of Jaffna Teachers' Association has issued the following press statement:

"The University of Jaffna Teachers' Association at its emergency meeting held on Monday 22nd November at 10 a.m. discussed in depth the recent arrest of one of its members Mr. T. Nithiyananthan, Asst. Lecturer in Economics and his wife Nirmala and expresses its grave concern and deplores the manner in which they were taken into custody and detained at the Gurunagar Army Camp.

"The arrest and detention of Mr. & Mrs. Nithiyananthan and several Priests marks a new phase in the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been condemned by human rights organisations and several Political Parties, Trade Union and mass organisations in this country and by responsible international bodies such as the International Commission of jurists and Amnesty International. We urge the Government at this juncture to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism act which allows for indiscriminate arrests and detention and interrogation under inhuman conditions.

"Bearing in mind that Mr. & Mrs. Nithiyananthan and several others are being held under this act, we call for their immediate release or that they be produced before a magistrate under the normal law of the land immediately."

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REFERENDUM UNDERMINES DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

-CENTRE FOR SOCIETY & RELIGION

The following is the text of the memorandum submitted by the **Centre for Society and Religion** to President Jayawardene, Prime Minister Premadasa and Ministers and Members of Parliament. The memorandum is signed by Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, the Director of the Centre:

"PROLONGATION OF LIFE OF THE *1977* PARLIAMENT TILL *4*th AUGUST *1989.*

"We are deeply grieved that you are taking steps to try to put off General Elections to Parliament for another six years by means of a Referendum to continue the life of this first Parliament till 4th August 1989.

"We would like to first mention that we publicly disapproved of the last Government's extension of the life of the National State Assembly for two years under the 1972 Constitution.

"We welcomed what we considered were positive advances in the 1978 Constitution such as the introduction of the system of proportional representation and the better provision for certain fundamental rights. We however, stressed the unsatisfactory nature of the balance of power between the Presidency and Parliament and the likelihood of conflicts and of the breakdown of the system (ref. Report of Select Committee of NSA-Revision of the Constitution, 1978 pp.284-292).

It is now being sought to continue the present power balance in Parliament itself and between the Parliament and the Presidency by a referendum.

The arguments put forward by the government are that:

a) The October 20th 1982 Election gave the President 52.9% of the votes. It is argued that on this basis the Government Party would have won 139 seats under the 1972 Constitution. Therefore why should the life of the 1977 Parliament be not prolonged for another six years?

b) There should be a stable Government for another six years for the present development plans to be completed.

c) The people are given a chance to exercise their sovereignty through a referendum.

Concerning a) the Presidential Elections, we wish to point out that:

1) **The October *20*th Presidential Election was for** one person to be the President out of six known candidates. It was not a vote for the members of the present Parliament but for the President. In fact it was clearly stated several times by the President himself that there would soon be a General Election for Parliament, when the electorate could choose their representatives.

2) The October 20th 1982 Presidential Election gave a result that was 52.9% for Mr. J.R. Jayawardene and 47.1% for the others of the valid votes counted. At the level of the total electorate, however it was 42.36% for Mr.J.R. Jayawardene, 37.74% for the others and 19.9% abstentions and spoilt.

The Government itself had clearly and categorically rejected the 1972 Constitution and its system of elections. That was why a system of proportional represention on the district basis was introduced.

The DDC Elections of 1981 were on that basis. Therefore to argue now on the basis of the 1972 Constitution is really to use Constitutions to the Government's advantage as and when it suits them.

Further the 1977 Elections were for 168 seats. The 1978 Constitution provides for 196 seats. If the referendum is successful a Parliament of 196 members will not be elected till 1989. This is to reduce the representation in Parliament.

There was a boycott of the presidential elections by the TULF and several abstentions in many parts of the country. It was on this basis that the President got 52.9% seats on the first count.

3) The Presidential Elections were held with the leader of the main contending party being debarred from contesting or canvassing at that election by a resolution of Parliament.

As the President himself said his victory was one of mathematics, political strategy and the disarray of his opponents.

b) The second argument is concerning the stability of government. This should not be ensured by denying the people a right to change or choose their representatives for 12 years. We should not have stablility by prolonging the disproportionate representation realized under the 1972 Constitution which this government itself rejected.

c) The deeper question is concerning a **referendum and the sovereignity of the people.** It is true that a referendum is an exercise of the sovereignty of the electorate.

What is now sought by the Government may be **legally correct** if the people approve the constitutional amendment by a majority vote with at least 1/3rd of the electorate voting in favour.

What is legally correct is not necessarily just and righteous. Democracy is based on the principle of majority rule and the understanding that the majority will respect the rights of the minority. Government by consent is acceptable only if there is a fair and reasonable chance for the minority also to share power and/ or if their rights are respected. Otherwise those who are excluded from the exercise of power lose confidence in the democratic system of majority rule. The problems of the North bear witness to this.

The present proposal, even if the referendum is positively supported by over 50% of the voters, and though it may be legal according to the Constitution enacted by this Parliament **UNDERMINES THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS** for the following reasons:

1) The minority which may be up to 49% has no opportunity of improving their representation in the legislature for 12 years from 1977-1989.

2) The majority too cannot decide on their representatives as it is only the party chiefs who can nominate members to Parliament, even when there is a change.

3) The present Constitution does not provide for Govt. MPs of Parliament the possibility of expressing discontent with the Government, except at the risk of losing their seats. Crossing over can be only to the Government.

4) The electorate cannot change the proporton of seats even among the Opposition.

5) According to the system of P.R. on the basis of the October 1982 Elections the Opposition

CONTD ON P.4

YOUTH MUST REALISE THEIR STRENGTH
-THE REV. FR. SINGARAYER

"Today the public speak ill of the modern youth. They consider the youth as anti-social elements. Politicians, priests and social leaders should approach the youth with sympathy for the problems they face."

So said **Rev. Father A. Singarayer** of Colombuthurai at the Annual Tamil Retreat held by the Saint Joseph's Cathedral, Grandpass, Colombo, on Saturday the 13th of November, the last day of the Retreat.

Rev. Fr. Singarayer who was the Chief Guest-Priest of this Retreat further stated; "The youth must realise their strength and power. They must realise that this stage of their life can never be regained in their lifetime; hence they must dedicate this best part of their life to their society and their Nation and try not to limit their lives to the narrow bounds of their family. They must use the mass media such as Radio and Cinema creatively for their development."

He added a special word to the mothers: "Just as Mother Mary laboured bravely and selflessly to save her baby from the tyrannical laws of King Herod, the same spirit of courageous love should imbue our mothers as they nurture their children".

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CONTD FROM P. 3

would have had about 40-45% of the membership of Parliament. But under the referendum they will have only about 16%. The SLFP with 2,458,438 votes i.e. 39% of the electorate in its favour will continue to have only 7 MPs.

6) No new parties will be represented in Parliament. This is grossly unfair by the JVP which has obtained 273,428 votes in October 1982 and demonstrated its national status as a political party willing to function within the democratic system. Likewise for the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and other parties not represented in Parliament. The President has often expressed his desire to have eminent political leaders of smaller parties in Parliament. This too is excluded by this legal but unfair process.

7) Younger citizens are denied a chance of contesting, nominating or voting for candidates other than those presently in Parliament, for twelve years 1977-1989.

8) The referendum does not give the voters a choice of alternative candidates, parties or policies. Nor does it give an opportunity for the electorate to opt for another proportion of party representation within Parliament.

9) The MPs are not personally accountable to their constituencies though they were elected in 1977 to represent territorial constituencies. The vote is now for a slate of 144 Government MPs or party nominees, 16 TULF, 6 SLFP, 1 CWC and 1 CP. This must be necessarily maintained till 1989 with the possibility of crossing over only to the Government.

10) The District Development Councils too would not have a renewal of members by election, as half of them are MPs.

11) No by-elections have been held (except after election petitions) or will be held because the Constitution of 1978 provides for proportional representation. With the proposed referendum there will be neither proportional representation nor general elections.

12) If the present President relinquishes his office before February 1989 i.e. the end of his second term, it is the present Parliament, which now wants its term extended, that will elect a President to complete the balance period of the second term. This too is a breach of trust concerning the presidency itself.

The present referendum if accepted by the electorate may be legally correct, but it will be a contravention of the principles and spirit of democratic government. It will be an unfair use of power by the majority in a Parliament in the last few months of its term. It is a grave breach of trust by the rulers who promised to hold elections and spoke so eloquently of proportional representation.

Such a situation will frustrate the large minority of 45-49% who will have to be content with 16% of the representation in Parliament. When the political process leads to such frustration, there is a loss of faith in representative government, in the electoral process and government by consent. Our electoral map would then in effect be rolled up or freezed for 12 years, 1977-1989. There will then be no legal possibility of changing policies or rulers by popular will. We are on the way to one party rule. This is the road to the violence of the disaffected, to legal injustice, terrorism and counter- terrorism.

This is the sad state to which our country will be brought by this urgent rush to freeze now the composition of our Parliament from 4th August 1983 to 4th August 1989.

The path of justice and statesmanship demands more than mere legal correctness, or political strategy. We are indeed distressed that those in the present parliament should so seek to entrench themselves in power irrespective of the grave damage to the fifty one year tradition of democratic elections in modern Sri Lanka. The rulers of today bear a heavy responsibility for the future of our country if they thus deprive a large section of the population of a democratic path to determine policies through elected representatives.

We therefore urge the Government for the sake of our democratic way of life, and for its own good name not to proceed with this measure.

GANDHIYAM/RB UNDER ATTACK

GANDHIYAM and RED BARNA, two voluntary charitable organisations, are under attack by the government which is reported to have ordered a probe into their activities and organisation. Mr.K.W. Devanayagam, the Minister for Home Affairs, is reported to have instigated the government to initiate the probe.

These two organisations came into being and commenced functioning mainly due to the need to help those victims of racial riots of August 1977 and thereafter. The frequent racist attacks on the Tamil speaking people resulted in an exodus of a large number of Tamil plantation workers to the Northern and Eastern provinces. Gandhiyam and Red Barna were engaged in the rehabilitation of those people who had been displaced and rendered destitute and turned into refugees in their own homeland.

In spite of all forms of obstruction from the government and frequent attacks by the security forces upon rehabilitation settlements, international funding agencies commended the work of these two organisations and gave financial and material aid for continued work of rehabilitation.

While Gandhiyam concentrated mainly in the Vanni district in the North, Red Barna (Save the Children-Norway) has been playing an important role in rehabilitation work in the Eastern Province particularly after the cyclone disaster in November 1978.

Many church and youth organisations have supported and assisted both these organisations in their work.

Having failed in their obstructionist and disruptive endeavours, the government, ably assisted by the racially biased media, have commenced a discreditable campaign of vilifying these two organisations with baseless accusations of their alleged connections with 'terrorism'.

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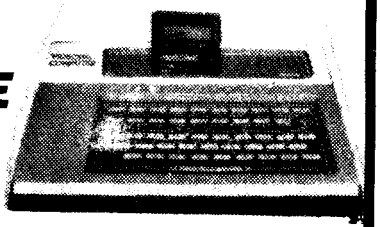

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REFERENDUM - A DEMAGOGIC EXERCISE

MIRJE APPEALS TO TULF

The Movement for Inter- Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) has made a special appeal to the TULF leadership "to refrain from being drawn into discussions with the Government on the national question until the conclusion of the referendum and to actively participate in the campaign for the preservation of the fundamental rights of the people to elect their own M.Ps".

A signed appeal by MIRJE President **Paul Caspersz** "deplores the reported efforts of the Government to place before the Tamil-speaking people at this juncture token concessions as solutions to their problems and considers such overtures opportunistic and intended to compel the Tamil United Liberation Front to softpedal its campaign against the Government's proposal at the referendum".

While calling upon the Government to forthwith end the State of Emergency MIRJE says;

"Inasmuch as the **Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality** is a democratic movement committed to the realization of justice and equality in the field of inter-racial relations, and inasmuch as the realization of these objectives is possible only under conditions of democracy, the movement is duty bound to warn the people of the absolute danger to democracy inherent in the present move of the government to postpone parliamentary elections and extend the duration of the present parliament by a full life-span of six years through recourse to a referendum.

"MIRJE is opposed to the decision of the government to substitute a referendum for the constitutionally due parliamentary elections. The usually democratic device of referendum in this context is patently demagogic. Besides there was no unanimity about even the constitutionality and the legality of this move if we are to judge by the fact that three of the seven Judges of the Supreme Court dissented from the majority decision of the Court.

"The referendum would amount to a denial of the right of the people to elect their own MPs.

"What would emerge in the event of a victory for the proposal of the government at the referendum is a parliament devoid of even a semblance of independence and which would be nothing more than a mere rubber stamp of the President.

"The subordination of Parliament to the President has already been ensured by the blank letters of resignation submitted by the UNP Members of Parliament to the President who in his dual capacity as Head of the State and Leader of the Party, is in a position to replace sitting members by nominees of his choice.

"MIRJE views with alarm that the state of Emergency, which was brought into force ostensibly to prevent post-election violence, is now being continued and is being used to take into custody a number of political persons known to be opposed to the government, to seal presses of opposition political parties and prevent the publication of their newspapers.

"MIRJE calls upon its members and all those who value democracy irrespective of their normal party loyalties, to vote against the government's proposal at the referendum The electorate should be free to vote into power at the constitutionally due general elections a goverment of its choice, even a UNP government for that matter, and even with an absolute majority."

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TRADE UNIONS SAY "NO" TO REFERENDUM

Twentyfour major trade unions of Sri Lanka have jointly called upon the people to vote against the proposal to extend the life of Parliament by six years and thus defeat President Jayawardene's attempt to undermine democracy.

While appealing to the workers, peasants, the youth, students, women, intellectuals and all minorities including the Tamil speaking people to cast their vote in favour of the symbol- POT- to defeat the dictatorial programme of J.R. at the Referendum, the statement goes on to say:

"The U.N.P. in 1977, came to power by claiming that they are the saviours of DEMOCRACY. But within a few months, they made the opening for a dictatorial path, by way of a constitutional amendment. This new constitution was made use of to abolish the independence of the M.Ps for five long years. Anti- U.N.P., anti-capitalist forces including Workers-Peasants-Students-Youth-Tamil speaking masses and Women were oppressed through state power and thuggery and by bringing into force laws like the PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT. U.N.P. had the advantage of pushing through this Repression as the working class was in disarray.

The U.N.P. having come to power in the presidential poll, on 20th October, 1982 is now abolishing the left-over of the democratic rights under capitalism, by trying to extend the life of the Parliament by six years...

"It is the organised working class that has the might to defeat the U.N.P. dictatorial programme. It is the responsibility of all democratic loving forces to unite in defeating the proposal of the U.N.P. government by shedding all theoretical and political differences.

We therefore appeal to all anti-U.N.P. and democratic forces to join hands with the working class to defeat the attempts of the U.N.P. government.

London Tamil Congregation Watch-Night Service

The Rev. Kingsley Muthiah will conduct this service at Putney Methodist Church at 11pm on Friday, 31st December (New Year's Eve).

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ETHNIC QUOTA SYSTEM OPPOSED

The Board of Management of the Ceylon Institute of National and Tamil Affairs **(CINTA)** has sent the following resolution to President Jayawardene.

"The Board of Management of CINTA submits for the consideration of the Government, that the proposal of admission to universities and recruitment to State Sector Services on an ethnic basis is a denial of the fundamental democratic right to equality of opportunity to all citizens as enshrined in the 1978 Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and requests the Government not to proceed with it."

The CINTA in a memorandum to the President states further:

"Equality of opportunity in this context means that a candidate with equal or better qualifications should not be denied access to a position merely for the reason that he belongs to a particular ethnic group.

"The infringement of a fundamental right is not the only objectionable feature of the proposal. In a society where all citizens are free and equal, it is a widely prevalent article of faith that it is the meritorious who should man positions of responsibility in the service of the State for the just and efficient working of the body politic. To secure a steady and constant flow of such personnel, higher education should be kept free from discrimination on ethnic or other sectarian lines. Merit is a sine-qua-non, particularly in a developing country.

"However, in areas where educational facilities are substandard, it is imperative that selection of a certain quota of promising students at a certain stage of their schooling be made, and to arrange for their admission through scholarships, if necessary, to recognised schools which provide the basic requirements of university admission, with a view to giving recognition to merit.

"The introduction of the ethnic element in the matter of recruitment to Public Sector Services and admission to the universities is bound to lead to a further compartmentalisation of the Communities, which has become progressively accentuated in the past few decades, endangering the realisation of the unity of the country and the cooperation of the various peoples for its progress and development.

"We would therefore urge your Excellency to take immediate steps to withdraw the proposal."

The memorandum is signed by CINTA President Mr.V. Manicavasagar and Secretary Mr.J.K. Ratnanandan. Copies have been sent to the Minister of Education, Minister for Public Administration and the Leader of the Opposition.

TELF SECRETARY ARRESTED & RELEASED

Mr.K. Eelaventhan, the Organising Secretary of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, was arrested on November 14, and was later released on the 16th after his statement was recorded.

On the day of his arrest, his house was searched for one-and-a-half hours. Mr. Eelaventhan was questioned as to who had financed his trip to attend the New York World Eelam Tamil Convention, and as to whether he had been given any presents by Tamils living abroad. Several recorded cassette tapes, books, articles and documents were seized by the police.

Mr. Eelaventhan's statement was recorded on 16th November in the course of which he was asked as to how he hoped to achieve Eelam to which his reply was "By non-violent mass agitation based on the Gandhian creed. I don't believe in violence because it obstructs mass participation and efforts to bring about a change of heart among the Sinhala masses and the government." He was questioned about the speeches he made in London, New York and Germany, and also about the differences between the TULF and the TELF.

Up to now, the security forces have not returned the articles seized from Mr. Eelaventhan.

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lese leaders who attempt to suggest solutions to the ethnic problem by the recognition of certain fundamental rights of the Tamil speaking people is a traitor and a betrayer of Sinhala and Buddhism:

To claim any moral right to talk or write about racial or national harmony, Migara and his fellow journalists should, firstly abandon the practice of prostituting their professional skills in disseminating racially biased propaganda. Secondly, they should begin to report facts and events as they exist and take place in an objective and unbiased manner. Thirdly, they should expiate their sins by commencing a sustained campaign of "deprogramming" the Sinhala masses so as to neutralise them from the evil effects of their racist drugs they have been dispensing in liberal quantities over the years. They must explain to the mass of the Sinhala people that:

- while Sinhalese should retain their identity as a nation and protect their culture and traditions, the Tamil nation also should have the same rights. The dream of creating a single nation by a process of progressive assimilation or by colonisation of traditional Tamil areas is not one which has proved acceptable to the Tamil speaking people.
- The continued and unresolved ethnic conflict is not going to end or disappear by the adoption of strong-arm methods, whether in the form of periodic racial pogroms directed at the Tamils, or by violence and terror used by the security forces.
- The preoccupation with this continuing and apparently never ending conflict will not help in the economic progress or development of the country as a whole.
- The existence of two ethnic nations should be recognised and their rights restored and respected, and failure to do so will inevitably lead to an accellerated campaign for the division of the country and the irresistible recourse to the increased use of violence as a means of political struggle.

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MIGARA & THE SRI LANKAN PRESS

BY R. GANESHAN

Migara of the 'WEEKEND' is no ordinary journalist. He is reputed to have access to the most confidential and secret of information. It is through his columns that the country comes to know about what is contained in secret cabinet memoranda, why, how and at what time the President of the Country made certain decisions, contents of internal security documents, details contained in statements made to the police or any other security personnel and many other matters about which ordinary journalists would find it almost impossible to gather any information. Some of his jealous colleagues say that the highest and the mightiest in the land talks to or informs the country and the people through the columns of Migara. He pontificates on every subject with an authority that no other journalist possesses.

However, when it comes to inter-racial matters or anti-communist baiting, Migara reveals himself to be no different from the rest of his colleagues.

Recently (Weekend of 28.11.82), after the detention of some priests in Jaffna, Migara in his usual weekly column wrote:

"Communal and religious fervour are being whipped up by Eelam Agit-prop. It is unfortunate. The ordinary peaceloving Jaffna Tamils are being fed with large doses of communal propaganda by agitators who carry the gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. A la PLO...According to intelligence sleuths working up in the North, the climate is one akin to the situation which prevailed prior to 1971 insurgency. Bombs, guns, political patronage, militant youth and even conflicting reports about foreign involvement.... This focuses attention on the role of religion in the north. Could it be that it is the Soviet Union again that is involved with some members of the Catholic clergy or is it that some other super power is operating in the north through religious institutions?".

What diabolical duplicity? When it is the Buddhist clergy going about the country carrying Dutugemunu statues whipping up racial and religious hatred and anti-Tamil hysteria, for Migara and his colleagues. it is patriotism and nationalism. But when it comes to others, they are being manipulated by the Soviet Union or some other super power!

The Sri Lankan press in general, whether state-owned or otherwise, and the Davasa Group of newspapers (in which Migara works or rather sells his professional soul) in particular, have been engaged in a continuous and sustained campaign of publishing openly racially biased material during the last several decades. The Rajaratnes, the Mettanandas, the Jayasuriyas, the Sri Pereras, the Bandaranaikes, and the Cyril Mathews were portrayed by these newspapers and their columnists as the saviours of the Sinhala race and Buddhism. Whenever attempts were made to reconcile the ethnic conflict in the country, these newspapers scuttled all those efforts in the name of Sinhala and Buddhism. They publish one thing in English and another in Sinhala. They played a major role in whipping up the required racial tension and in preparing the groundwork for the riots and violence directed against the Tamil speaking people. The one and only serious attempt made in 1958 by the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and the late S.J.V. Chelvanayakam to solve the vexed ethnic question was sabotaged in no small measure by the despicable role played by the Sri Lankan press. Ever since, they have been actively engaged in the exercise of dispensing daily doses of biased and distorted propaganda against the Tamil speaking people and in favour of the extremist Sinhala chauvinist sections. They have also tried their utmost to minimise or suppress all facts about the extent of the discrimination and atrocities commited against the Tamil speaking people.

When Migara talks about the 'peaceloving Jaffna Tamils are being fed with large doses of communal propaganda', one is tempted to ask several questions. Where were Migara and his newspaper barons during all these years when the peaceloving Tamils continued to remain peaceloving while day by day their rights were being deprived; year after year they were being subjected to racial violence, and their property destroyed and their women raped; and when the security forces behaved like an army of occupation rampaging the city of Jaffna and setting fire to the Public Library and other major buildings in the peninsula and harassing, arresting and torturing the ordinary peaceloving Tamils in the north? Did Migara and his companions think that the 'peaceloving Jaffna Tamils' should forever remain peaceloving until their identity as a nation is liquidated?

If the youths among the Tamils have lost their faith in their parliamentary leaders, and have taken the path of political violence as a method of struggle, the Sri Lankan press must bear its share of responsibility for that development. Just as much as the Sinhala political leaders thought and conducted themselves not as national leaders of all the people, but as primarily leaders of the Sinhala Buddhists, the Sri Lankan press, also did not think or conduct itself as a national press, but as an instrument for and on behalf of the Sinhala Buddhists.

The Sri Lankan press, by its distorted and biased propaganda has over the years psychologically 'programmed' the majority of the Sinhala-Buddhist people into thinking that:

- Whoever speaks or does anything in favour of Sinhala or Buddhism is a nationalist;
- Whoever speaks or does anything in favour of Sinhala anything in defence of the rights of the Tamil speaking people is a communalist at best and a tiger or terrorist at the worst;
- whoever among the Sinha-

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SINHALESE LIONS & TAMIL TIGERS OF SRI LANKA - II

by David Selbourne

"Sri Lanka is gradually coming apart at the seams. The trouble is that the public and the army are both up against an enemy which is being shielded by the community; indeed, without popular support the Tigers would not have got this far," says the author in the second instalment of a two-part study of the movement for Tamil Eelam.

David Selbourne visited Sri Lanka during September-October prior to the Presidential election. This is the second part of an article specially written by the author for the Illustrated Weekly of India, which we reproduce with their kind courtesy.

The term "Tiger" is a misnomer. They are not running wild in the jungle, but moving about in Jaffna and its district, hiding among the people: clean-cut young men, with moustaches as close-clipped as Brigadier Ranatunge's, the army commander in the northern province. They do not need to camouflage themselves to pass undetected among the ordinary passers-by of the city. No wonder the Tamils refer to them as "our boys". That is precisely what they are.

Talking to them, in and around Jaffna, makes everything clearer. The turning-point for most was the 1976 anti-Tamil riots; the discovery, as one Tiger put it to me, that *ahimsa* was not sufficient.

Paranoia Deepens.

The Tigers are armed, the DIG of Jaffna, W.B. Rajaguru, told me, with Sterling sub-machine guns, selfloading rifles and 303s. Some of the weaponry has been seized in raids, but other items, he says darkly, "are not standard issue". Funds for them, he alleges, have been collected by Tamil expatriates in Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia. ("We have got our machine guns from the army and smaller weapons from outside (India)," the Tigers told me.) He calls the Tigers "pure terrorists of the urban guerrilla type.

Surrounded by awards and trophies, the Army Chief of Staff in Colombo. Major-General Tissa Weeratunge, one of the many relatives of President Jayawardene in high places, was honest about the situation. "We are not on top," he told me. In Jaffna, they say, a whole truck-load of troops goes out to buy a tube of toothpaste or a box of matches.

"The initiative is with the terrorists," he continued. "They choose the time and place. We can only be reactive." He also claims, as paranoia deepens, that the political training of the Tigers is being "coordinated from Britain", and that there is a "West Asian connection".

Nine of the 16 police stations in the Jaffna district have already been closed. The Mavor of Jaffna, Rajah Visuvanathan, complains that the police are no longer carrying out their ordinary civic functions. (Obviously, a traffic cop is a sitting duck for a sniper.) When I arrive at the Gurunagar army camp in Jaffna where it is all spit-and-polish, with junior ranks springing to attention like jack-in-the-boxes they are combing the pages of the Jaffna *Saturday Review,* with its open editorial support for Tamil Eelam. On the wall is a chart of military vehicle dispositions; on a desk, files marked "TULF: Secret".

'Politically Low-Level'

Despite their internal conflicts, and accusations by some Marxist students in Jaffna that they are "politically low-level", the Tigers seem better disciplined and less frightened than their police and military opponents. It is difficult to join them; there is, they told me, a six-month probation period, a tightly-organised cell structure, and strict discipline, including an internal death penalty. They are also constantly on the move, so that it is difficult for anyone to give accurate information under interrogation. There are cells not only in Jaffna, but in other Sri Lankan cities, including Colombo; their central tenet is the "commitment to a separate Tamil state, which will be socialist and democratic."

Brigadier Ranatunge, who forgot his impartiality sufficiently to tell me that "we are a majority Buddhist nation", is bitter, not merely about the ambushes and killings but about the political response to them. "When a policeman is shot dead," he complains, "no politician attends the funeral service." But the politicians are scared, too: Jayawardene does not set foot in Jaffna. "Al- not set foot in Jaffna. "And when our forces make a breakthrough, we get shot in the back in ambushes."

The trouble is that the police and the army are both up against an enemy which is being shielded by the community; indeed, without popular support the Tigers would not have got this far. Bishop Wickremasinghe angrily accuses those who help them of "fiddling with terrorism". The soldiers insist that it is only through fear of Tiger reprisals. Yet Tiger numbers are growing; and the bitterness of the police and military is of men who are not winning. Ranatunge says he wants to "finish off this terrorism". But he cannot. In the mean time, new para-military forces are being trained, and new levels of foreign assistance being sought by both sides.

Parcel Bombs

The Tigers, for their part, seem confident. They tell you that their membership is increasing daily and that detentions and brutality "are making us strong, increasing our momentum". "We think very deeply into the question of violence," a Tiger told me. "Our targets for assassination are the armed agents of the state, and we select them only after a careful study and full inquiry." Even DIG Rajaguru, who says that "their animus is the same as the Naxalites'," admits that the Tigers are "hard to pin down and getting more skilful". Torturers like Inspector Gadegama have started receiving their first parcel-bombs. The Tigers say, eyes laughing, that the police and the army are inefficient.

The immediate prospect for both sides is a dire one-with neither a political nor a military solution in the offing.

The days of Appapillai Amirthalingam, the Secretary-General of the TULF, must be numbered. He has not only been leading his troops away from the sound of gunfire, but, at the same time, denying the obvious: that it is the activities of the Tigers which have induced Jayawardene to discuss the Tamils' demands with the TULF in the first place. Moreover, he told me that they would have to learn to get used to the army in the northern province. "How?" I asked him. "Like we live with mosquitoes," he answered, laughing. He did not sound like the liberator of the Tamils. While trying to pacify his own Tamil militants, he is trying to extract concessions from the Sinhalese by discreet, and even sectret, negotiations.

He believes that dialogue, and not the approach of the election season, has led to the containment of repression (though, at best, it is only a lull). "I have no army, no police, to give my people protection," he told me. "I had to go to those with power and get them to maintain law and order. If I had told Jayawardene to go to hell, so many more Tamils would have gone to heaven. We are not fighting from a position of strength. We are walking on a razor's edge." He calls his a "pragmatic" approach, and says that in the complex chess game he is playing, or thinks he is playing, with Jayawardene, "we are smart enough not to be checkmated".

But the main TULF leadership has already lost the support of the younger generation of Tamils; Amirthalingam's own son is opposed to what his father is doing.

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Part of the trouble is that, as Tamil militancy has grown, the TULF's elderly parliamentarians-many of them lawyers (they call it the Tamil United Lawyers' Front) - have got out of their depth with talk of armed struggle, to say nothing of the fact that they have more in common, in class terms, with their opposite numbers than a dividing factor.Amirthalingam even sympathises with Jayawardene's dilemma. "I am able to see," he told me, "that he cannot move as far as he would like." But what Amirthalingam cannot see is that he is himself being overtaken.

Certainly, with Lenin in their back pockets and guns in their holsters, the Tamil militants in the north are now a world away- not only from traditional Hinduism, but from the leather-bound law reports in the Colombo offices of most of their leaders. "After the 1981 riots," says S.C. Chandrahasan, the son of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, a former leader of the Tamils, "I told our youth; 'Give the TULF one last chance.' Instead, they went back to dialogue. Ours was a mass movement," he says bitterly, "until the TULF opted for negotiation."

It seems only a matter of time before he takes over his father's mantle from the discredited TULF leaders. And he does not speak the same language as Amirthalingam: "Repression," he declares, "helps to make our struggle a reality, and suffering takes us towards our goal." Amrithalingam stresses the weakness of the Tamils; Chandrahasan their determination. And if the latter were to succeed to the leadership, there would not only be an end to negotiation but a boycott of Sri Lankan institutions and the setting up of a provisional government, either in Jaffna, or "in exile".

Jayawardene does not disguise his low opinion of the present Tamil leaders; he does not think most of them even want Tamil Eelam.

Without the fetters imposed on her, Mrs Bandaranaike would be a real threat to Jayawardene and the UNP. (She is a threat even with them.) Indeed, despite the splits in her own SLFP, and the fact that she personally cannot take part in the next elections, her confidence about a come-back seems to be rising. At present, using the suspicions of the Buddhist clergy about a "sell-out" to the Tamils to promote her own cause, she does nothing to abate Tamil fears that she would crush their movement for Tamil Eelam if she were eventually to return to power. She is fishing in troubled waters.

Other Fish To Fry

"No one wants Eelam," she said by way of dismissing my question. When I challenged her, she put it differently:" No *government* could agree to it. This is too small a country." She hardly seemed interested in the subject. "For her the Tamil problem is a non-problem," they say in Colombo.

But then she has other fish to fry; the Tamils can wait. A victimised mother-figure is, in any case, a potent force in the sub-continent's political culture, whatever her own crimes and misdemeanours. "She has suffered enough," they say in Sri Lanka, as they used to say in India of Mrs Gandhi, who,in comparison, has not suffered at all.

Now, Mrs Bandaranaike offers Sri Lankans her persona, her wrongs, her son, her criticism of the politicians in power. It is the familiar family *tamasha.* But whereas in India the Janata disintegrated while holding power, here it is the Opposition which is at sixes and sevens. The JVP of the 1971 insurrection is reincarnated as a parliamentary party: Colvin de Silva, the veteran Trotskyite, is contesting the Presidency with Jayawardene. But at the time of writing, the rest of the Opposition- the left included-was not inclined to support him.

de Silva, like Mrs Bandaranaike thinks that "this little country is too small to bear separation. The two fragments would become instruments of other interests." But it is too late for such caveats. He admits that it is the "most unstable situation in my 50 years as a politician". Sri Lanka is gradually coming apart at the seams. There is even an independent Tamil left being born in Jaffna which, for the first time, is not linked to Colombo.

In such a confined space as Sri Lanka, the middle-ground between the communities is disappearing; but then it never was more than an island within an island. The Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala, Lakshman Wickremasinghe, admits that "time is running out".

As with the British and the Catholics in Northern Ireland, ordinary Sinhalese are finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish between terrorism and Tamil demands for justice. Worse, it is the younger Sinhalese generation-and the young Tamils also-who are least capable of mutual understanding; their horns locked in racial combat, and both sides bent on a "final solution".

He is standing with his feet in a furrow, teeth blackened with *caries.* We are in Vavuniya, which is 80 per cent Tamil, in the north-central province. His is the tale of an exodus-still largely unrecorded outside Sri Lanka-from the line rooms of the tea and rubber plantations during the racial attacks of 1977 which brought arson,, plunder and murder to the "Indian" Tamils.

The police and the army - as many as a thousand at a time have invaded, some landing in helicopters, others driving their armoured cars ('it was like ploughing') across the new crops-harass the settlements, searching for Tigers and beating up suspects.

The former plantation-coolie, middle-aged and pallid, with what seems like a malignant growth on his lip, now squats before you in a ragged head-cloth, his face grey-stubbled. He was tied, struck in the face with fists, and hung upside down from the roof beams, face bleeding, for hours. He crosses his thin arms on his chest to show how they tied him; but if this is crucifixion, there will be resurrection here also.

There are already more than 40 new Tamil villages in this district, and the Sinhalese are moving in also, It is colonisation and counter-colonisation. Even landless Tamils from Jaffna have come down here to settle. "They are supposed to be running farms," Brigadier Ranatunge said to me with asperity, holding up Gandhiyam brochures between thumb and forefinger, "but they are terrorist centres. Why should I harass innocent people?" To the army every striped shadow is now a tiger.

Front Line Of Struggle

The whole area seems on the verge of explosion; with bitter hostility between neighbouring villages, exclusively Sinhalese or exclusively Tamil.. "They are afraid of us now," say the plantation refugees, "because our numbers are growing." Moreover, under Gandhiyam pressure on the local administration, ten per cent of them have been given land deeds. There are tensions, too, between the indigenous and refugee Tamils; but the harassment has made the settlers even more determined. "We will stay here and die here," they say as they gather around you.

Many of the settlements are 25 miles or more into the jungle from Vasuniya. In fact, what they have achieved, in spite of obstructions by the state and the army, is a prodigious collective effort, carried out with the help of the Gandhiyam's moving spirits: S.A. David, an architect, and S. Rajasundaram, a medical practitioner; and with aid from overseas voluntary organisations.

More ominously for the Sinhalese, "we have started moving towards liberation," said a squatter-village headman, 20 miles from Vavuniya, formerly a tea-plantation worker. "Here everybody is for Tamil Eelam." On the up-country estates, they ask; "What good will Eelam do us? Will it find jobs for one million plantation workers?" But, here, they say, "We are fighting for the next generation."

Free of the suffocation of the line rooms and the shackles of their serfdom, this is a new political language and new defiance. Vavuniya, not Jaffna, is the front-line of the Tamil struggle; and on this battlefield, they are not likely to be defeated.

The coming presidential elections have united the Tamils at least in one respect: that of their trepidation. "We associate every election with violence," they say. And when there is

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and a rough wind, school girls from two institutions boycotted classes, lined up in front of their college gates, held black flags on their college flag pole and sported black badges. From 9a.m. they held this protest - fast for six hours. The girls who are from Jaffna Holy Family (English) Convent, and Holy Family Tamil Maha Vidyalayam, said that the teachers were not involved in this strike, and that the protest was spontaneously organised by the students themselves. Their slogans said, "We'll boycott newspapers which are prejudiced", "Struggle will continue till we sight victory".

★**ATCHUVELY** About 1200 people gathered in the compound of St. Joseph's Church on Wednesday from morning 6 o'clock to evening 6.

★**DELFT:** On Thursday, about thousand people began a protest march at 3p.m. from the Cathedral and marched two miles around this island, claiming the release of their parish Priest Rev. Fr. Sinnarasa.

TULF LEADER ON "NATIONAL GOVT"

Mr.A. Amirthalingam, the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front is reported to have said that the TULF would, in the interest of the entire community consider sitting down at a negotiating table if it comprised a true representation of the political parties in the South of Sri Lanka, and the formation of a national government representing all the political parties could well signal an era of peace and progress, according to a report in the 'WEEKEND' of 28th November 1982.

He told 'WEEKEND':

"We have come, time and again to the conference tables, but few of the concessions wrung from this government have been implemented. The Tamil community has been soundly condemned and has been labelled as ungrateful for not supporting President Jayawardene at the Presidential Election. As a minority, we are compelled to retain our identity or become totally ineffective."

"It was not humanly possible for the TULF to do so in view of the continuing frustrations of the Tamil community. The party leaders have not been able to answer the question of the people as to what the dialogue has produced.

"I have even been made to look like a fool who has been led up the garden path."

"We are aware that the President is keen on working out a settlement but there is a very big gap between what is agreed upon and what is implemented by the bureaucrats. The removal of the Buddha statue at Vavuniya is one classic example."

"The correct things must not only be done but it must also be necessarily done in time."

"Our nomination of Kuttimani to the vacant Vaddukoddai seat was not done because of any pressure, to give into the terrorists. It was merely a symbol of protest".

"We do not condone any acts of Kuttimani and for that matter there is no excuse for terrorist violence."

"We have always condemned terrorism and I have personally gone round schools requesting youth to desist from joining them. The bulk of the people are against violence."

"But it must be realised that discrimination creates violence which in turn creates more discrimination. Sadly, this discrimination looks like it will never go away. Even now there are those who are preparing to come down on the Tamils, namely because they did not support the government."

"Despite all this, I still believe that there is yet a glimmer of hope."

LONDON PROTEST

The Campaign for the Release of Eelam Political Prisoners of Sri Lanka, an organisation comprising several London based organisations, held a protest picket on 11th December 1982 outside the Ceylon Tea Centre. They were protesting against the latest wave of indiscriminate arrests, including the arrest of several members of the clergy, by Sri Lankan security forces.

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COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE -M.P. SPEAKS OUT

ON HUMAN & TAMIL RIGHTS

This is the text of a speech delivered on October 10,1982 by Mr.K.P. Ratnam, M.P. for Kayts, at the 28th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in the Bahamas.

"Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. We perhaps take it for granted that the people of the member countries of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association enjoy Parliamentary democracy in which freedom of the individual and human rights are guaranteed. But, in fact, in some of these countries, not only has the individual no freedom and human rights, but also the minorities, racial and even national, have no such freedom and fundamental rights

"Sir, it is a tragedy that the UNO and such other international organizations including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which speak of all sorts of freedoms and charters of human rights, always feel shy of taking up the cause of the downtrodden and suffering minorities in many countries. They say the clashes and confrontation between the majority and minority communities are internal matters which should be settled by the countries concerned. There is no justification whatsoever, for this sort of stand taken by these international institutions who claim that they are making every effort to achieve peace and prosperity.

"Clashes of interests, confrontation and rivalry take place not only between two countries but also between the majority and the minority communities of a country. Therefore, there should be an appropriate third party or a neutral institution to settle the disputes between the majority and minority Com munities of a country.

"Unless the freedom of the individual and the freedom of those belonging to minority groups are assured there cannot be peace and amity in any country and as a matter of fact in the whole world. This is a fundamental fact; the callous neglect of this fact has been the main cause for the failure of the League of Nations and the UNO to achieve world peace.

"The corner stone of the freedom and human rights of an individual is his political freedom. A minority which is denied by a majority community its political freedom, and its rights of self-determination cannot naturally lie low forever.

BY K.P. RATNAM, M.P.

When the minority community of a country begins to agitate and struggle for its political freedom and fundamental rights, bitterness, rivalry and communal ill-feelings poison the minds of the members of the majority and the minority communities. This in turn gives rise to communal riots and all kinds of violence. Terrorism also starts to show its ugly head in that country. Then in the name of Parliamentary democracy inhuman and draconian laws are promulgated by the parliament of that country, by the members of the majority community against the minority. Thus the so called parliamentary democracy slides into an authoritarian form of Government or even becomes a majority dictatorship.

"I cannot help mentioning the law passed recently by the Sri Lanka Government, namely the PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT which is considered worse than the apartheid laws of South Africa by a mission sent by the International Commission of Jurists.

"As the repeated requests of the Tamils who are a national minority in Sri Lanka for political freedom and self determination and their agitation for their fundamental rights were ignored by the majority community, communal riots are taking place periodically in that country. Hence the Tamils of Sri Lanka have been forced to fight for a separate state which they call TAMIL EELAM. The Tamil United Liberation Front which is the biggest political party of the Tamils and which is also now the leading opposition party in the parliament of Sri Lanka, has declared in and out of Parliament that its goal, at any cost, is a free secular social sovereign state of Tamil Eelam.

"Some of the Tamil Youths of course, enraged by the discrimination and hostility shown by the majority community have resorted to terrorism in spite of our party's avowed policy of non-violent struggle. There are many Tamil youths who are kept under detention, suffering torture without trial for many months.

"The inhuman acts and discrimination perpetuated not only in Sri Lanka but also in many other countries can be stopped if there is an accredited authoritative international institution to intervene in clashes between minority and majority communities and settle them peacefully guaranteeing the individual freedoms and human rights to all.

"Mr. President, before I conclude I would like to suggest that a goodwill committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association be appointed, as a forerunner of a much needed world body to consider ways and means of solving peacefully the problems, disputes and confrontations between the majority and minority communities of a country.

"The peaceful solution to these problems will help not only the minorities but also stop all the violent killings of human beings and the wanton destruction of property which have become a daily occurrence in the world. If we succeed in this attempt, only today's discussion on freedom of the individual, human rights and responsibilities will have any meaning at all.

I wish to quote a maxim from Thirukkural which scholars like Dr Schweitzer hail as a common gospel of mankind "The world exists because of good natured men, if not the will perish."

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ABOUT PEOPLE

WEDDINGS

Muthunayagampillai - Arasaratnam.

The Rev. Noel Muthunayagampillai, Pastor, New Testament Church of God, High Wycombe, Berkshire, and son of the late Mr. V.T. and Mrs. Ruby Muthunayagampillai of Manipay, and Miss Gloria Arasaratnam (daughter of Walter and Beatrice Arasaratnam of Batticaloa) were married on Saturday, December 4, at the New Testament Church, Caversham, Reading.

Sambasivam - Selvaratnam

The marriage took place on Saturday, December 18, at the Putney Methodist Church, Gwedolen Avenue, London SW15 of Yohendran (son of Mr.K. Sambasivam, 47 Fernbank Avenue, Sudbury, Middlesex) and Griselda Gunaseeli (daughter of Mr. & Mrs.M. Selvaratnam, 17 Orchard Close, Long Ditton, Surbiton, Surrey).

Arumuganathan - Ranganathan

The marriage took place on Thursday, December 9, at Manjavanapathy Temple, Kokuvil, Sri Lanka of Dr. Thanigasalam Arumuganathan of 17/7 Aiyanarkovil Road, Jaffna and Miss Nandhini Ranganathan, eldest daughter of Mr. & Mrs. A. Ranganathan of 5705 Lenox Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20818, U.S.A.

OBITUARIES

Kanapathipillai Pathmanayagam

The death occurred, as a result of a car accident, in the early hours of Sunday, 28th November, of Mr.K. Pathmanayagam, a popular and versatile teacher. After obtaining a B.Sc. degree from the University of Ceylon, he first taught at Colombo Hindu College and then, for 12 years, at Jaffna Hindu College. He came to England in 1971 and took up a teaching appointment at Tudor School, Kingston where he continued to enjoy the affection and acclaim of his pupils as well as his colleagues. He will be particularly remembered for his willingness to give of his time and talent to every one who sought his help. He leaves behind his wife Maheswari and three children, Shakila, Ganesh and Sharmini.

Vythialingam Muttucumaraswamy

There passed away on Saturday, 27th November, after a brief illness, the veteran schoolmaster and writer, Mr.V. Muttucumaraswamy of Thurleigh Court, Nightingale Lane, London SW12. The funeral took place on 5 December at the South London Crematorium.

Mr. Muttucumaraswamy who was 74 years of age at the time of his death had taught at Prince College, Kotahena and St. Joseph's College, Maradana, and here in London at the Forest Hill School.

He will be particularly remembered for his studies on Arumuga Navalar, C.W. Thamotharampillai, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. The revised edition of his work on Arumuga Navalar is to be published shortly by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Colombo.

He leaves behind his wife Thangaretnam, herself a trained graduate teacher, a son Arabindhan (UK Ministry of Defence) and two daughters, Shambavy (India High Commission) and Bhanumathy (teaching in Sri Lanka).

Chellappah Seevaratnam Ponnuthurai

The death occured at 56 Ratnakara Place, Dehiwala, on Friday, 12 November, at the age of 73, of Mr. C.S. Ponnuthurai, teacher at Jaffna College for over 25 years and later at Wesley College. He will be remembered not only as an outstanding teacher of the middle forms - he handled with consummate ease subjects as varied as English and Botany, Mathematics and Religious Knowledge - but also as a very successful organizer. He was General Secretary of the All Ceylon Union of Teachers and of the Student Christian Movement. He played an active part in the Diocesan Synod of the Anglican Church of Sri Lanka. During his stay in London in the 60's he helped form the Committee for Tamil Action and later the Association of Ceylonese in the U.K.

He leaves behind his wife Violet and two children, Mrs. Shanthi Somasundrum of 29 Merlin's Avenue, South Harrow, Middlesex and Dr. C.P. Sarvan, Lecturer in English, University of Zambia, Lusaka.

Kathiravel Sivapragasam

The death occurred suddenly on Tuesday, November 2, of Mr. K. Sivapragasam, LL.B., Barrister-at-Law. He was educated at St. John's College, Jaffna, and served for a while in the Sri Lanka Police Force. He was a keen sportsman and an active member of the Association of Sri Lankans in the U.K. He leaves behind his wife Girtie and three children - Ranjan, Tina and Dilojan.

Rev. A.C. Thambirajah

The Father and Founder of "Navajeevanam" was called to his 'Heavenly Home' on 1st November 1982

His perishable body was cremated following a simple thanksgiving service on 3rd November.

Just like MOSES, the man with a vision, A.C.T. moved into a jungle area in Paranthan, Sri Lanka. This was in 1959. He was accompanied by his wife, 8 children and the English Missionary, Sister Elizabeth Baker, M.B.E.

Previously, he was the Pastor at Uduvil parish, Jaffna.

The jungle area went through a mysterious transformation. The Navajeevanam of today is a miracle. The community consists of over 300, who are, mainly, growing boys. This has become their 'home'. Life in Navajeevanam centres around a beautiful church, surrounded by buildings, farms and workshop.

The secret behind Navajeevanam is simply prayerful life and hard work.

P.C. KULANAYAGAM.

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SHREE RAMA AVATARAM

I came down to London from University on 27th November 1982 for what turned out to be a rather special occasion. It was the presentation of 'Shree Rama Avataram' - an eastern ballet by the London Narthana Alaya in aid of the Jaffna Public Library.

The story of Ramayana in dance is no small project, and if the work was to be carried out successfully it was to require a phenomenal amount of planning. The degree of commitment was evident as soon as the curtains opened onto a marvellous shimmering set of the court of King Dhasaratha, and later the forest - both creations of Rajan Surenthiran.

The task of Rathika Perinpanayagam as choreographer and director (not to mention performer) was not an enviable one. Something like fifty children were involved in the production and the mental gymnastics employed to devise positions for each of them at various places on stage throughout the show defies my comprehension!

The elegance of the many costumes complemented the sets but however it did inevitably lead to delays between scenes during which the dancers threw on and off costumes. On talking during the interval to one of the ladies who was helping with the rapid costume changes, her exclamation was "My goodness it's hectic in there!" The wonderful thing was that this never showed during the performance. Moreover, the dancers (particularly the older ones) moved with a confidence that could have only been instilled through extensive rehearsal and clearly defined training.

Having an articulate narrator in Dr. Manju Sivanathan was very welcome to younger members of the audience like myself who were ashamedly unfamiliar with the Ramayana story.

It was a show that was memorable for its lavishness and excellent character portrayals.

Mohan Yogendran.

Standing Committee of Tamil - Speaking People Office - bearers 1982-83

At the Fifth Annual General Meeting held on 6 November, the following were elected:- *President* Mr C. Kathiresan *Vice-President* Dr. R. Sri Pathmanathan & Dr. R. Thayaparan. *General Secretary* Mr. R. Mahadeva, 69 Streatfield Road, Harrow, Middlesex (Tel: 01-907 6836) *Asst. Secretaries* Mr. T. Visvendran and Mrs. S. Sivanithy *Treasurer* Mr. M. Thiagarajan *Asst. Treasurer* Mr. K. Yogendran.

SCOT NEW YEAR LUNCH

This popular social event in the life of the Tamil community in London takes place on Sunday, 2nd January, 1983 at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, London SW17. Tickets (Adults £3, Children under 12 £1) are available from Mr. M. Thiagarajan, Treasurer SCOT, 24 Brook Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex (Tel: 01-958 2739)

UNP ORGANISER SHOT DEAD

An Organiser of the ruling United National Party in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, Mr.V. Thambapillai of Punnalaikadduvan, was shot dead by an unidentified gang of five men, who had come on bicycles.

The attack took place in broad daylight on November 15th at 9.30 a.m.

Mr. Thambapillai was a businessman and a Justice of the Peace.

MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER SHOT AT

Mr.C.V.K. Sivagnanam, Commissioner of the Jaffna Municipal Council, was shot at by four unknown armed men while he was bathing at a well in Nallur on November 21st.

The attackers are said to have arrived on two bicycles at 7.45 a.m. armed with revolvers and shot him, injuring him on the chin.

Mr. Sivagnanam, who is not critically injured, is being treated at the General Hospital, Jaffna.

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CONTD FROM P.9

"trouble in the north"- a euphemism for a Tiger killing- "you become acutely sensitive to every sound and smell in Colombo. If you catch a whiff of kerosene, you immediately think someone's house is burning".

This could be a Cyprus in the Indian Ocean, especially since the Ceylon Tamils who live in SInhalese areas could be vulnerable hostages should the cause of Tamil Eelam now be pushed forward without compromise. And even if the practical problems of Tamil statehood-partition, defence of a long border in the north and east of Sri Lanka, economic viability, international guarantees, and so on-have hardly been raised, let alone thought about, it is a political aspiration a true national question if ever there was one, that needs careful watching.

Political Purchase

Moreover, with the Indian mainland only 22 miles away from Jaffna, a political *cordon sanitaire* cannot be placed around Sri Lanka; India is too important and too close as a behind-the-lines arms source and tigersanctuary beyond the reach of the Sri Lankan army. According to S.C. Chandrahasan, there are already around 1,000 Tamil youths from Sri Lanka in, what he called,"de facto asylum in India."

Of course, real Indian support will be needed for Tamil "liberation"; but even without it , New Delhi's discreet approval- not the same as support- for Tamil Eelam, and its unhelpfulness over Colombo's demands for the extradition of Tigers, are already significant factors in Sinhalese calculations about what it can get away with in its struggle with the Tamils.

Yet, with Mauritius demanding the return of Diego Garcia, Sri Lanka's deep-water harbour at Trincomalee is also of increasing potential value to Western interests. Indeed, some of the Tamil leaders actually see further hope for the cause of Tamil Eelam in the growing involvement of the superpowers in the area.

They think that an unstable, but strategically critical, Sri Lanka would give the Tamils extra political purchase, especially under Indian protection. That the Colombo government, after the presidential elections, might also try to crush their movement with even more Western assistance (particularly West German) than it is already getting, no one is saying.

Now, he is a mere night-watchman, come down in the world to this lonely vigil from being a Sinhalese overseer of Tamil Labour on a British tea-plantation. Between the frogs' croaking, there is deadly silence. "Tigers are being sheltered right here," he says, pointing into the moonless night towards Dehiwala and Wellawatta in south Colombo.

He lapses into silence, his expression glassy. "We let them live here," he says into the blackness, as if talking to himself, "but can we go to Jaffna?" No harm has ever been done to civilian Sinhalese in Jaffna, so I am told, but there is no point in arguing. "Jayawardene has extended the hand of friendship to them but they spurn it. They are more united than we are, but if the Buddhist clergy rise up, it will all be over for the Tamils. They cannot take the north. This is a Sinhalese country," he says flatly. The night is airless, suffocating. Only the bullfrog, croaking, answers.

KUTTIMANI IS NOT an MP: SRI LANKA SPEAKER RULES.

The Speaker of Sri Lanka's Parliament, Mr Basheer Markar, has ruled that Yogachandran alias Kuttimani, who is in prison awaiting the verdict on an appeal in the Supreme Court on his conviction in a case of murder and robbery, is not a Member of Parliament.

The Speaker informed the Minister of State, Mr. Anandatissa De Alwis, that Kuttimani would not be recognised as an MP until he took his oath.

Kuttimani was nominated by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

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ARREST OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS

While the state-controlled Sri Lankan press published sensationalised and distorted accounts of the arrest and detention of some clergymen in Jaffna and their alleged connections with "terrorist activity", the *Saturday Review,* the one and only independent regional English Weekly, published the following account:-

"Amala Utpavam" with its beautiful garden and calm breeze from the sea is the serene residence of the Catholic Clergy at Colombuthurai in Jaffna. One section is occupied by aged retired priests, the other by young preachers.

On Saturday the 13th at 10.30 p.m. jeep loads of armed soldiers approached "Amala Utpavam", and while about 30 soldiers immediately surrounded the building, about 10 C.I.D. personnel walked in and knocked at the room of Rev. Paul Jeeva. They questioned him regarding tapes and records he had given for recording at a record bar in the Jaffna Supermarket.

Learning that the records were those of Fr. Singarayar, they forcibly opened his room; he was preaching in a Cathedral at Grandpass, Colombo that day. In Fr. Singarayar's room they had found a file of correspondence and cash. Fr. Singarayar being the "Superior" of the Residence and in charge of the financial management of the place, sometimes has big sums of money in his keeping.

Searching Rev. Paul Natchethiram's room they found a poster and a colourful button containing Eelam slogans. After searching and ransacking "Amala Utpavam" till 3.30a.m. the next day they took the two young priests Paul Jeeva and Natchethiram to the Gurunagar Army Camp.

Rev. Singarayar travelling after his retreat at Grandpass reached Jaffna on Sunday morning, and on learning that he was wanted went straight to the Gurunagar Army Camp at 7a.m. where he was detained.

"Meanwhile going through a file of correspondence of Fr. Singarayar, the soldiers arrested Rev. Regis Rajanayagam of the Naranthanai Parish on Sunday evening. That evening at 6 p.m., they also brought from Vavuniya the Anglican Priest Rev. Dr. Donald Kanagaratnam (past 50 years, the oldest among arrested priests and the President of the MIRJE branch of Vavuniya) and the Catholic Parish Priest of Chettikulam, Soosainayagam. On Monday morning Rev. Sinnarasa was arrested at Delft.

Till Monday (Nov 20) afternoon 1p.m. many of the arrested priests had not even been questioned, but asked to sit in chairs without speaking to each other. They were not given even mats to sleep in the night but had to doze in the chairs.

It was when the priests demanded to be questioned that they were interrogated on Monday evening. Late that evening Paul Natchethiram and Regis Rajanayagam were released. On Tuesday (Nov.21) at 6 p.m. Paul Jeeva was released.

On Wednesday (Nov.22) at 6p.m. Rev. Dr. Donald Kanagaratnam was released. He was received by Revs. Kenneth Fernando, Duleep Chickera and Godwin Weerasooriya who had come from Colombo that morning as emissaries of the Anglican Bishop, and was taken immediately to his Parish at Vavuniya.

At 8.15p.m. on Wednesday Revs. Sinnarasa and Soosainayam too were released. By Thursday, Rev. Singarayar was the only person still detained at Gurunagar."

MORE & MORE DETENTIONS

Rev. Sam Jayatilleke and Rev Jega Sunderaj, two Methodist ministers, Dr. D.W. Jayakularajah, Dr.M. Nithiyananda, a Lecturer at the University of Jaffna and his wife Nirmala were taken into custody by the Sri Lankan security forces on November 21 st and have since then been in detention in the Gurunagar Army Camp, Jaffna.

Brigadier S.C. Ranatunga,chief Co-ordinator of the security forces in the Jaffna District, alleged that 'terrorists' who had been injured in the shoot out following the attack on the Chavakachcheri police station had gone to Rev. Sam Jayatilleke and sought his help to have themselves treated.

Mr. Ranatunga further alleged that Rev. Jayatilleke had taken the injured to Dr. D.W. Jayakularajah of the Methodist Hospital, Puttur, who had given them medical attention.

Three of the injured later sought refuge in the house of University lecturer, Dr.M. Nithiyananda, and had been nursed and looked after by Mrs. Nirmala Nithiyananda for eleven days.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JAFFNA LIBRARY

The Jaffna Municipal Council has unanimously passed a resolution to reopen the Reference Library in the Northern wing of the Public Library, now under repairs "to alleviate the sufferings of especially the undergraduates and post-graduate students."

The Council has chosen Human Rights Day, 10th December, as the date for the reopening of the Reference Library in honour of the civilized world's outcry against "the wanton and deliberate destruction of the Jaffna Public Library by the custodians of law and order."

RO-RO FROM S.INDIA

By March 1983 the people of India and Sri Lanka will have one more mode of travel between their countries. A ro-ro (roll on, roll off) vessel with accommodation for 600 passengers is being put in service between Tuticorin and Colombo, to begin with on a twice weekly frequency.

A ro-ro vessel is a ship which has an inbuilt ramp which swings out and forms a bridge between the ship and land for passengers to cross. When the vessel pulls out of the harbour the ramp swings back into place.

Apart from the air services now operating between Madras and Colombo and between Tiruchi and Colombo, people can now travel by train up to Rameswaram switch over to ferry to reach Talaimannar, and again back to surface transport up to Colombo in the island.

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